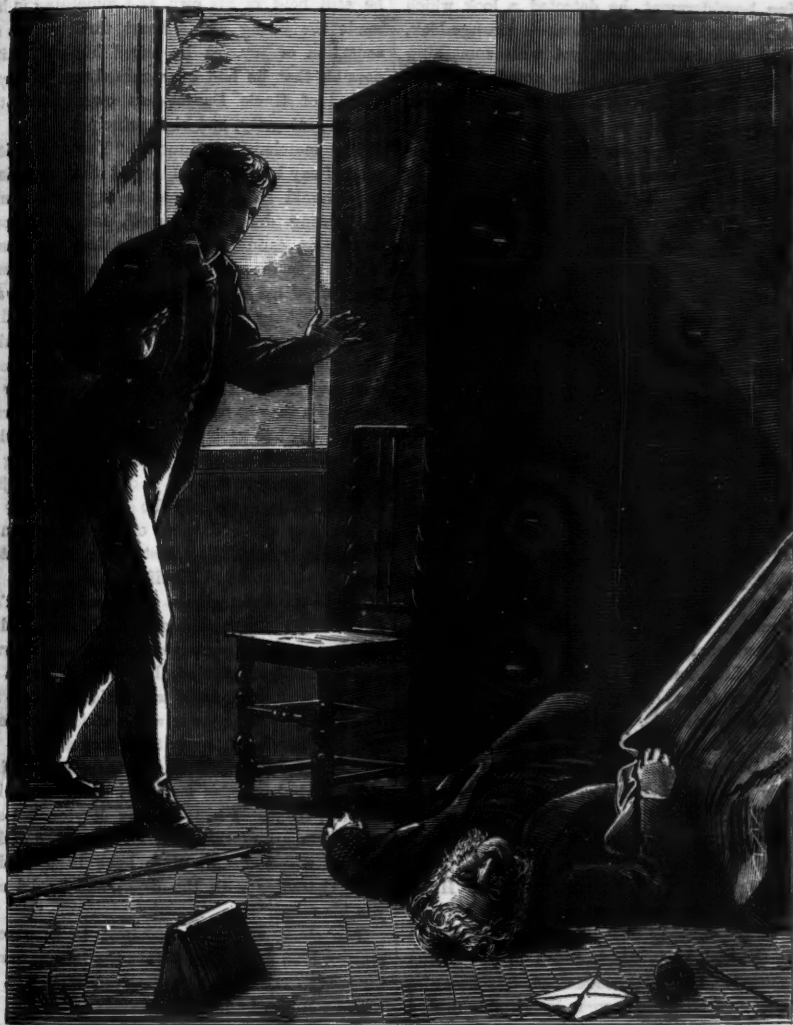


THE QUIVER

Saturday, September 4, 1869.



"Stricken down at the very moment when he believed himself to be needed most."—p. 758.

UNDER FOOT.

BY ALTON CLYDE, AUTHOR OF "MAGGIE LYNNE," ETC.

CHAPTER LII.—ENLIGHTENED.

THEY made a striking group, the four thus strangely brought together. Mark Danson, conscience-stricken, and quailing under the searching gaze which he feared most to meet. Hugh Crawton, with his heart in a tumult of conflicting feelings, visibly astonished by his uncle's unexpected visit, which he was uncertain how to interpret, and wondering at Mark's evident agitation, which was utterly

inexplicable to him. Not the least excited of the party was Giles Royton, who kept close to his master's side, as though he found some sense of protection in being near him. Was it that he feared the anger of Eleanor's husband? To Hugh's increasing bewilderment, he detected a look which his cousin flashed at the old clerk—a strange look, half sullen and half defiant, yet with something of despairing pleading in it. He noted, also, the altered expression of the smooth face which, a few minutes ago, he had seen smiling so pleasantly—an expression of painfully intense anxiety that pinched it into unnatural lines, and gave it a look so ghastly and haggard that it startled Hugh. The head was bent forward, and the chest and shoulders seemed to have contracted, as if for warmth after a sudden chill. The whole figure of the young man had a shrunken, covering look, as though still writhing under some crushing blow and waiting for another to fall. Hugh made his observations, but the only result was, that he was unable to account for anything he saw; for, as yet, not a shade of suspicion had crossed his mind with reference to Mark Danson, in whom his simple faith still remained unshaken.

Not a word was spoken until Daniel Crawton, contenting himself with one full, steady look into Mark's face, walked to Hugh's side and took his hand; all the angry light dying out from his eyes, and giving place to a far different expression, in which every severe line was, for the moment, relaxed and softened. His face was still heavily overshadowed, and there was a contraction of pain about the mouth which had been there from the moment that he heard Giles Royton's revelation; for the startling discovery of the unworthiness of Mark, the adopted son, about whose future he had framed so many high hopes, had been a sharp stab to the proud, honourable heart of the old merchant. His voice was the first that broke the silence; but not one of his hearers suspected what a struggle it cost him to speak so firmly. It was characteristic of him to go direct to the point without any preparation. "Hugh Crawton, I know now the truth about that strange business of the missing cheque and the fraudulent entries in the cash-book, which ended in your being falsely accused and unjustly condemned. The base plot against you, conceived with some inscrutable design of evil which at present I cannot fathom"—here his glance wandered sternly to the shrinking face of the unhappy Mark—"worked only too successfully; and perhaps," he added, slowly, "the fault was chiefly my own. It might have been that I was rash and blind in too readily accepting the evidence, but to outward appearances it was conclusive enough, and I acted as seemed right to my convictions under the circumstances. I never forgot that you once did me a great service, Hugh, and afterwards, up to the time we mention, you kept your place and served me

faithfully in it. Still I did not spare you any more than I would have spared another in your place. I thought I owed it as a duty to myself and others to make no exemption in your favour."

Here his grasp tightened over Hugh's hand, which he still held in his own, and something in his look made the young man's heart thrill with a sudden sensation of joy, as he asked himself if it were possible that he had ever gained any hold upon the regard of Uncle Daniel—his own exalted type of honour, integrity, and high principle.

The merchant continued: "You will believe me when I say how deeply I regret that anything like this should have occurred in my employment, also the wrong done to yourself, for which, perhaps, reparation cannot be made in the full sense. It is needless to say that you shall be cleared, my boy—acquitted with honour in the minds of all who know anything of this sad affair. That shall be my first care; and, for the rest, I am very thankful to have you proved innocent, Hugh, and to find that you have cast no stain of disgrace upon your name. Whatever may have been their failings, the Crawtons always liked to keep their family honour; whatever their personal enmities and quarrels among themselves, they never stooped to do underhand injuries—never gave those stabs in the dark which have almost as much of the evil spirit of the assassin in them, though only levelled against a man's character and good name instead of his life."

Again the stern glance wandered to Mark's face. A few seconds more, the uncle held the hand of his nephew, as if it were some recovered treasure on which he had set a price; his voice taking a lower, gentler tone, and such wonderful softness falling upon his face as he spoke words which sunk into the young man's heart, never to be forgotten.

"And now," continued the merchant, raising his voice, "what remains for us is to proceed with the inquiry, Hugh. I believe Giles Royton has already made you aware that this has been the work of an enemy, whose design must have been to damage your character with the firm; but he did not tell you his name."

The clerk, who still managed to keep near his master, here drew himself into the talk by answering for Hugh Crawton. "I promised Mr. Hugh that I would tell him to-day."

Mark Danson heard the words. It might have been observed that the hand which rested on the arm of the couch opened and closed with a convulsive movement, and his light eyes shot an indescribable glance at the speaker from their lowered lids; but Giles Royton did not look towards him, and the merchant still kept his face turned to Hugh, whom he still exclusively addressed. "Tell me frankly, Hugh—I know now that I may rely upon your word—tell me, during all the time that you held a situation in our firm, both as clerk and cashier, do you recollect any

circumstance that might tend to make you any enemies among your fellow-workers?"

Hugh gave a decided negative.

"Can you think of any individual who would be likely to have a selfish interest in getting you discharged?"

"Not one," replied Hugh, reflectively.

"And you have really no suspicion in your mind, concerning the person who did you that cowardly injury?"

"I have not," faltered Hugh, now powerfully agitated. "I cannot remember one among your clerks who ever gave me cause to think they were other than friendly towards me."

How Mark winced under those words, so full of touching candour and good faith in others. He had taken much pains to secure for himself the esteem and confidence of generous-hearted Hugh; and now, when he knew it was impossible to retain either, he discovered that they were really of value to him. What torture to be compelled to sit through that terrible interview, listening while that stern voice, which he dreaded more than any other in the world, read out the verdict of his condemnation; and that keen, shrewd intelligence inexorably dissected his schemes, tracked out every unworthy act, and penetrated all the disreputable secrets, which it had been the labour of his life to keep from such detection. To be thus unmasked by his hand, and in the presence of the one whom he had injured, with the additional sting of knowing that what he had conspired for his cousin's ruin, would now serve to fix him more firmly than ever in the regard of Daniel Crawton, who for the sake of justice and the mere sense of what was due to his young relative, as reparation, would feel himself bound to give him that high place in his favour which Hugh had so well deserved. All this Mark Danson knew, and it added much to that bitter hour of his humiliation and defeat. He drew his breath in short, quick gasps, and cast helpless, longing glances towards the door; but he felt that escape was impossible: the dreaded investigation must go on.

Daniel Crawton's look was very grave, as he dropped his hold of Hugh's hand, saying, "And now for the bitter truth, which must not be longer kept back. I am sorry, Hugh, that your trust in human nature should be shaken thus early in life—especially that one of your kindred and mine, and one, too, who has professed to be your friend, should have proved himself such a traitor."

The speaker's voice gathered more sternness with the last words. He had taken out his pocket-book, and Hugh caught the rustling of paper, as he crushed something in his hand, and turned somewhat abruptly away, making a sign to the clerk, and murmuring in his ear, "Now you may tell him the name."

Then, in obedience to that agitated whisper, with

a strong return of the pity for his old master which had moved him during their interview in the office, Giles Royton drew aside the bewildered Hugh, and in a low, hurried voice told the astounding fact that Mark Danson was his unknown enemy—the forger of the fraudulent receipt for the cheque—the malicious agent who had conveyed the betting voucher into his drawer, that it might tell against his private morals, and ruin his prospects by offending a well-known principle of the head of the firm.

Hugh seemed utterly stunned by this information, for which he was so little prepared. He dropped into the nearest seat, and his lips whitened and trembled, as he repeated, slowly, "My Cousin Mark, to have done this to me!"

He looked across the room, through a sort of dim haze which surrounded the figures of the uncle and nephew. The old man standing before the crouching figure on the couch, holding out a paper, and like one in a dream. Hugh heard the well-known voice, saying, sternly—

"There is no chance left for you to vindicate yourself, and as little as you have spared others can you hope to be spared in your turn. Subterfuge and denial will avail you nothing. I know now the full extent of your deceptions, and my blindness, even if other evidence were wanting, here is proof positive of your guilt, for you will not dare to deny this," holding forward the duplicate receipt. "Nor this," he added, joining the torn piece that belonged to the betting voucher, which, as Giles Royton guessed, he had preserved in his possession.

Mark's face grew livid, as a sense of the hopelessness of his position forced itself upon him; and a strange look swept over his face—a wild, hunted look—as of some animal brought to bay. He raised his head as he spoke. "I shall attempt nothing in my own extenuation, uncle, as I know it would be useless in the present state of your feelings towards me. Perhaps it is all owing to my being a Danson." This was added with something of a sneer, which Daniel Crawton was too excited to perceive. "But with regard to that man—your informer," continued the speaker, bitterly, pointing to Giles Royton, "I must confess that I failed in my duty there, by allowing you to keep in your employ a clerk whom I knew to be utterly unworthy—an habitual gambler, who ought to have been dismissed four years ago."

It was well for Giles Royton that his penitent confession to his master had forestalled and rendered comparatively powerless this vindictive retaliation of Mark Danson, who was much disappointed at the effect of what he had intended as a crushing denunciation against the clerk.

His uncle replied, "Whatever may have been Royton's wrongdoing, Mark, you should feel that you put it out of your place to become his accuser, when you linked yourself with his family and became the husband of his daughter; a tie which you have since

so basely tried to keep secret from the world. And with regard to the father, I am not likely to forget that, unworthy as you thought him, you would still have been willing to grant him a continuance of favour, if you could thereby have bribed him to keep your secrets."

Mark silently writhed at this retort. The clerk had advanced a few steps forward, indignant colour flushing his cheeks, and unwonted light in his eyes. He was about to speak to Mark, but Daniel Crawton interposed between them, saying, in a low tone, "Angry altercation will avail you nothing; leave him to me now, and for the rest, depend upon my word that your daughter shall have justice, so far as it can be rendered to her. Poor girl! that secret marriage was a false step for her; but in this instance the fault has brought even more than its own punishment."

Here he looked anxiously towards Hugh, who instantly left his seat and came to him. He let his hand rest for an instant on the young man's arm, Mark Danson watching them with lowered eyes. It heightened the bitterness of that hour to witness such signs of restored confidence and amity between those two.

The merchant spoke in the same subdued tone, "I shall also ask you to leave us, Hugh; you will understand why I think it best for us all not to prolong this scene; but I hope to see you again soon. God bless you, my boy! It is a relief to be able to regard you once more in the old light. I have often felt that I would rather have seen you buried, than know you were living and unworthy of a thought. It is sad enough when the grave takes those we care for, but to have them lost to us by that other moral death, is worse than all."

Hugh returned the hearty pressure of the old man's hand, not sorry to have the wretched interview cut short, and be spared the necessity of saying anything to his cousin. His heart was too full for speech, and he felt that words would almost have choked him, even if he could have had them ready at command, which he doubted. Then he was impatient to hurry home, to rejoice the hearts that loved him, with the unexpected news, which would always make that day memorable for him. So he was glad to follow Giles Royton, and the two left the hotel together, leaving the uncle and nephew alone, neither of them having a thought of anticipation about the results that were likely to arise out of their strange meeting, and both unconscious how that severe day of trial would end for Daniel Crawton.

CHAPTER LIII.

STRICKEN.

THERE was silence between Mark Danson and his uncle for some minutes after Hugh Crawton and the clerk had left them. The old merchant began

rapidly pacing the room, as though the necessity for action was strong upon him—a habit peculiar to himself in moments of great excitement. The nephew still kept his seat upon the couch, preserving the same shrinking attitude, his hand shading his eyes, from which cover he tried to catch stealthy views of his uncle's face, as he passed and re-passed in that continuous tramp, to and fro, which betrayed so much of the disturbance of his mind and the fierce struggle of feeling that was going on while he walked, with that convulsive working of the muscles of his mouth, knitting his massive brows together until the deep grey eyes were nearly hidden. "If I had been like Robert," he groaned inwardly, "given up to small irritations and absorbed in self, I could throw off these things with more philosophy; as it is, they seem like so many blows against my life. I have not given much quarter to the affections—not encouraged many objects of regard. My nature has struck out few roots, but those few have not been wanting in strength. It may be that I let my sympathies run in too narrow a groove—depended too much upon external proprieties, and set too much value upon fixed rules of conduct. Is this the penalty—to be miserably deceived and disappointed in one whom I favoured more than all, and from whom I hoped so much? Oh, Margaret, my sister! is this the son that you gave me on your death-bed?"

At last the restless walk ceased, and the old merchant stopped in front of his nephew; it might have been noticed that within the last few moments his step had lost something of its steadiness, and once or twice he had put his hand suddenly to his head—significant signs, if Mark had not been too deeply engrossed with his own situation to regard them; for even as Daniel Crawton stood with his face looking so grey and grim in its severity, the body seemed to have a strange swaying motion, as if its muscular control was weakened. "Mark!" The young man gave an involuntary start, at the tone of the voice which pronounced his name; it sounded so changed and hollow. "I have some questions to ask, which I trust you will answer honestly." He paused an instant, but Mark did not avail himself of the opportunity to speak. His uncle continued: "To say nothing of the double part which you have played in your successful career of deception, and the unworthy motives which appear to have led you from one base action to another, even setting aside the manner in which you have deceived me individually, I want you to tell me the truth about this last wretched business of the forgery and the cheque; how you managed to ensure yourself against detection, and what design you had in plotting the ruin of your cousin, Hugh Crawton."

The questions were given inexorably sharp and distinct, with a tone of command from which there was no resistance or escape. Mark kept his eyes

down, fixing them desperately upon the carpet, and making a despairing circuit of the legs of surrounding chairs, looking anywhere and at anything, except the face near him.

Daniel Crawton repeated his last question. "Answer me, Mark. What made you such a traitor to one whose interests you always professed to study?"

Thus goaded with the dread of his uncle, and a certain feeling of helplessness in the conviction that Giles Royton's revelations had left him no loophole for self-defence, and driven almost to desperation, Mark gasped out something of the truth, humiliating as it was. "I—I can't exactly say; you are pressing me too hard; but I do know that I had always a fear of Hugh Crawton, even before I saw him—fear that if you were ever brought together he might supplant me in your regard, and come between us. When you took him into the office, I marked how he grew in your esteem; every day seemed tending to confirm my worst dread, and it maddened me to think of myself thrust out from that place in your favour, which I had come to consider as mine by right."

"And for this mean jealousy, Mark—a feeling so pitiable for any man to stoop to—you try to destroy one who had never wronged you in thought, word, or deed; there, at least, I can answer for Hugh Crawton as I could for myself."

"Yes, I know," broke out Mark, with a touch of irrepressible bitterness; "he has secured confidence that I could never win."

"Then the fault was your own," said the old man, sternly; "as I valued an honest heart, I liked a fearless tongue. If I had not been determined to shut out all doubt concerning you, Mark, there were many times when I should have distrusted your lavish professions and cringing anxiety to please. I felt that if I had been disposed to tyrannise in my position, you would have borne it; that was not like a Crawton. Even your father, from what I know of him, would not have cringed to others for the sake of any advantages which it might bring."

Mark did not raise his eyes, but commenced a fierce attack upon his nails, savage in his impotence at not being able to resent the home-thrusts thus dealt at him.

His uncle resumed: "To think of you, in your richer prospects, grudging to poor Hugh even the chance of an opening in life—the mere opportunity to earn his bread—knowing, as you did, the straitened circumstances of his family, and the difficulties in his way. Then to mislead him into the belief that you were his friend, even while you were secretly betraying him to his ruin—the work of a very Judas. Shame, Mark! my dead sister's son as you are, I can hardly bring myself to forgive you, even for your mother's sake!" and the grey eyes glowed under their bent brows, full of indignant fire.

The listener still kept his head down, as if he hoped thus to shelter himself from that torrent of impassioned words, which he did not attempt to arrest; he felt that silence was his safest refuge.

After a few moments the old merchant spoke again. "I gave you to understand that I should require an account of the missing cheque; what have you done with it?"

While his uncle spoke, Mark's fingers had been nervously fumbling with the clasp of a pocket-book, from which he now drew out a paper, and passed it silently into the old man's hand. It was the all-important cheque. He opened it with trembling hands, examined it carefully, then slowly refolded it, saying, "It is well that you have not destroyed it. Here, at least, I am willing to give you the benefit of a charitable thought, that you preserved this evidence of your guilt with some intention of eventually rendering justice, and doing what you could to repair that wrong to the innocent. I am anxious to believe this much in your favour, Mark. You will need to have something to help to redeem the past."

Again there was silence, Mark helplessly writhing under every word of that stern questioner, with a sort of despairing idea taking possession of him, that the terrible ordeal would never end. If he had been less absorbed in himself, he must have remarked a strange alteration in his uncle's face within the last few minutes. A dull, ashy paleness about the quivering lips, and heavy dropping of the eyelids; the breath also came in short, laboured gasps. But the strong will was still powerful in the midst of the incomprehensible weakness, which was already sapping the root of that proud strength. Even in this foreshadowing of its decline, the vigorous mind ruled the body, and the fire of energy burned on—kept alive by the high spirit, and the quality of endurance and resistance, which gave the character its martial type.

He spoke again. "I have another question to ask, Mark, which I hope you will answer with equal sincerity. I find, to my lasting sorrow and regret, that Hugh Crawton is not the only one whom you have wronged; for there is yet another victim whose life you have helped to darken, and that victim a weak, tender woman, loving you, no doubt, and trusting in you, as women will love and trust. I speak of the wife whom you were not man enough to acknowledge after you had married her. Mark Danson, whatever that girl may be, she must have justice at your hands. It is her right, and I will have it so."

The deep voice rose and fell, in his agitation, sweeping through the room like an angry gust of wind.

"And now for my question. You once led me to believe that you had a fancy for my ward, and I told you that I would rather see young May Rivers in her grave than wedded to one unworthy of her, who might prove traitor to his vows, and make her life a

martyrdom. I spoke then little suspecting the truth as it concerned yourself. And you—knowing yourself the husband of another woman—how dared you think of May Rivers, with the hope of winning her fresh girl's heart, when your love could be nothing but the vilest perjury? Answer me, Mark! Did you dare to carry things so far as to press your suit with May herself, acting upon the encouragement which I had unwittingly given you? Answer me at once; and if you ever wish to obtain my forgiveness, do not prevaricate or trifle with the truth."

"Yes, I—I believe I did speak to her once on the subject; but she refused me. I took good care that she should."

No reply, except a few inarticulate sounds, which could not be framed into anything like connected syllables. Mark looked up in surprise, in time to catch the ghastly hue of the old man's face, and see him stagger back, gasping for breath, and making convulsive clutches with his hands, as if to keep himself from falling. Another moment, and before the startled nephew could interpose his arm to save him, Daniel Cawton had sunk down upon the carpet, and lay at the young man's feet, his broad chest heaving with the loud, laboured breathing, and his eyes gazing upward, with a straining, troubled look, the memory of which Mark took with him to his grave. There he lay, stricken down at the very moment when he believed himself to be needed most—before any of his plans of reparation to the injured and innocent could be put into practice. Excitement and overwrought feeling had hastened the crisis, which had been creeping on for weeks. The nerves, strung to the highest degree of tension, had given way at last, and the once stalwart, muscular frame

lay a dead weight upon the floor, passive and helpless as a child;—the man of action, energy, and will, laid suddenly prostrate by a stroke which had hung over him for days, though he knew it not.

To say that it was not a shock to Mark Danson, would be to do him injustice; for if there was any being in the world whom he held in high esteem, almost amounting to reverence, it was his uncle, Daniel Cawton. But even at that moment came the alloy of selfish thoughts. He did not lose sight of his position for an instant; his mind gathered in at one sweep all the exigencies of the situation, and the probable issue of events, in their influence upon his own fate. In the midst of all, he could not repress a certain feeling of satisfaction that the absence of Hugh Cawton and the clerk left him in sole possession of the field. "Who can tell what may follow?" he summed up, mentally; "my prospects may be safe yet; for whatever plans he may have formed concerning Hugh and myself, he has not had time to act upon them; and that rascally Royton may find that he has over-shot his mark. Even if the governor recovers, he will be laid by for weeks at Broombank, and in the meantime I am master at the office. That pitiful old babbler shall feel my power."

His first active movement was to rush to the bell, and ring it with almost frantic violence; his next to go back to the old man's side, and bend over the prostrate body, trying to raise the head upon his arm, while that mad peal from the bell was still quivering through the house; and on the stairs were heard the hurried feet of bewildered waiters crowding up-stairs to answer it, with a vague notion that they were about to witness some tragic scene.

(To be continued.)

THE BREAD OF LIFE.

DAWN, sunset, starlight, in their wondrous glory,

Faint symbols of what mortal ne'er combined;

All tumults of time's beauty chant the story
Of things unseen, and hopes before the mind.

But thou hast longings for a beauty deeper,

A love soul-filling—hopes that never dim.

Lift up thine eyes and look, O lonely weeper!

Lo, Jesus draweth near thee: feed on Him.

He comes with human love most sweet and tender,

For He who made it, sure Himself hath most.

He comes with love divine in strength and splendour

More near to thee than to the seraph host.

Lord, wilt thou satisfy the restless longing

That through its darkness struggles to thy feet?

Oh, wilt thou calm the aching, still the thronging
Of troubled thoughts, and make the bitter
sweet?

Thou who didst say in thy great prayer, so truly,

That knowing Thee is everlasting life,

Grant us thy love! and train these hearts unruly

To follow Thee to joy, from pain and strife.

And whatso'er time hath, of joy or sadness,

To veil the Face we need and wait to see,

Shine through it, Saviour, like the morning's glad-
ness,

And in our hunger, let us feed on Thee!

A. BOND.

THE IDOLATRY OF CONFORMITY TO THE WORLD.

THERE are two forms of idolatry—one *material*, the other *spiritual*; and, whilst free from the first, we may be guilty of the second, although consecrated and dedicated to be worshippers of the Triune God and followers of the Lord Christ.

We may not bow down to a golden calf, as the Jews did when Moses was summoned to the holy mount to receive the moral law of love—the Ten Commandments. Our bedrooms may contain no images of the Virgin or of any patron saint, and yet we may be idolaters.

St. Paul says expressly that “covetousness is idolatry;” whereby is meant that when money, or any other possession, occupies *God’s place* in the mind and heart of man, he is an idolater. It may be laid down as a principle that, whenever God is dethroned from his rightful place in us—whenever his voice, speaking to us from within in the conscience, or from without in his holy Word, is neglected for the voice of anything lower than himself, then we are guilty of idolatry.

In Rom. xii. 2, St. Paul gives us the New Testament form of the Second Commandment. We are not to “be conformed to this world,” as if it were our God, and the measure of all perfection. We are, by the nature of our Christian calling, to take God alone for our guide, the supreme and ultimate judge and measure of all the movements and efforts of our intellect, affections, and will.

In the great and in the small His will is to be lord of our resolutions and actions. Our highest aim should be to find out what he would have us do, like St. Paul after his conversion (Acts ix. 6); and, having found it, to do it as promptly and thoroughly as we can.

“Be ye not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

It may seem a hard doctrine to receive, that worldliness is idolatry as really as the worship of a wooden idol. Such a truth must needs be unpalatable; but it must be spoken. It is the nature of Truth to be severe. Her eye is searching, and, sword-like, her words are sharp and cutting. But herein lies her value: for it is her office to cut off the false in men’s ideas, aspirations, hopes, wishes, words, and deeds.

Hence, an honest truth-teller, though he gain no popularity for himself during his life, is a real blessing to his age, and, if not “a joy,” a boon “for ever.” It should also be remembered that, in effect, half-truths do more harm than positive untruth.

It is the fatal evil of worldliness that it waters

down everything—leaves no stone unturned to make sin seem less, or not at all sinful. A fatal evil—for it is fatally seductive in its appeals to men who are from their birth prone to sin. A fatal evil, especially in an age like the present, when the ancient foundations of the Christian faith and of Christian morality are so persistently assailed, and society through all its stages is well-nigh mad with the “rage of luxury”—with fast, smart, and high living, to use plain words.

Dare, then, good reader, to look this truth in the face—that conformity to the world is idolatry.

Man is a moral and spiritual being. He has a spirit to hold communion with God; a conscience to represent God as his Lord and Judge, and a heart to love him as his Creator and Father; a heart which can be truly filled and satisfied with nothing less or lower than God himself.

When, therefore, we see the multitude plunging madly into sin, running wildly here and there for pleasure—one to this vanity, another to that—what is it, if we follow them—what is it, if we allow them to rule our spirits, hearts, and consciences, but idolatry?

St. Paul’s exhortation is a most solemn one; for, although modern society is against the worship of idols of wood and stone, it is not against “conformity to the world.”

The voice of the majority, the established customs of the many, are more respected and followed than the conscience, which is God’s law within; and better obeyed than the expression he has been pleased to give of himself from without in Holy Scripture.

The temporal and the carnal are put over the eternal and the spiritual, which is idolatry. And what follows from this? What followed in the case of the Romans, who would “not retain God in their knowledge?” who, when conscience supplied them with a high and noble ideal, cast it out; who stifled all the higher instincts and aspirations after truth and God which, even in its ruin, humanity possesses! What followed? Confusion—utter disruption of all human harmony. Read the first chapter of Romans, and you will see what a terrible thing it is to disobey conscience and God, and to follow the world.

Men reeled, like drunkards, in bodily sins and crimes unnameable. “Corruptere et corrumpi sæculum vocatur,” says Tacitus (“To corrupt and to be corrupted is the name of the age”).

God forbid that this should ever be said of England! For ourselves, let us, by the help which God so graciously and readily supplies to all who ask him, be on our guard against this siren voice of the world, so powerful, because at once so bland

and so severe. It appeals both to our pride and cowardice. It flatters us into sin as "an angel of light," and keeps us in, and prevents our getting out of its slavery, by threatening and terrifying us as "a roaring lion."

No one possessing the slightest power of observation will think of disputing the success of its appeal to our pride; but the "natural man" shrinks from the name of "coward." And yet how sadly true is it that many a man, whose conscience and better self condemn his words and deeds, sooner than incur the displeasure of the society in which he moves, "goes on still in his wickedness," regardless of the present stings of conscience and the terrors of the world to come! But this is to be not only a coward, but an idolater also.

The voice of the many is also powerful because it *so easily absolves from sin*; for there is nothing like it for giving a false peace to the mind. The world judges but pleasantly; not severely, like God and the conscience, because not "with righteousness and truth."

This watering-down of sin (as we have already called it) at last leads men to take low views of wrong; and by a law of human nature which intimately connects together doctrine and life, their *ways* become low like their *views*.

On the authority of the multitude, they erect for themselves a low standard of morality, and, as in the case of the Romans, their "idolatry of conformity" ends in stifling all that is elevated and good in them; in a degraded character, in the destruction of those things which serve to separate humanity from the brutes, to consecrate man to be lord over all earthly creatures, animate and inanimate.

It may be objected that practically this never happens.

"Homo sum : humani nihil alienum a me puto" ("I am a man; I take an interest in everything 'human'"), is the language of every man, as it was of Terence. We would earnestly hope and pray that humanity may never sink so low as to

degrade this interest. But the tendency of "conformity to the world" is to produce such a result.

It might also be asked, whether society has no conscience, and whether it is not made up of the consciences of individuals. We are sorry to have to reply, that the ways of society are *not* sanctioned by its conscience. Take, for instance, the indulgent way in which society deals with bodily sins of any kind—drunkenness, impurity, luxury. The very men who are guilty of them on the authority of society, will, in moments of silent thought and self-communing, utterly condemn themselves. No; let there be no mistake in this matter. You are not backed by the sanction of the *conscience* of the world when you sin on its authority, but by that of its *low desires* and *corrupt habits*.

In other words, in thus "conforming to the world" you prostitute your higher nature to the lower, which conscience condemns as idolatry; and if conscience thus judges, recollect the words of St. John: "God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things."

Before we close this paper, we would guard against a possible misunderstanding. Let it not be thought that "conformity to the world" means the sharing in its lawful pursuits and honours, whether of rank, learning, or industry. What the apostle condemns in the words which suggested our remarks, is the lowering of our spirit and conscience, heart and life, to follow the world. Whatever teaching draws us from God; whatever tends to lessen the spiritual and the divine within us, to put us under the dominion of our lower nature, to *obey that* is "conformity to the world"—is idolatry.

In all our deeds be it ours to guard against this. In all our *words* also. There is a time to speak out; to call things by their right names, black, black; sin, sin. By doing this, we may offend the multitude; but we shall gain that, whose loss nothing can make up for—the approbation of our conscience and our God. D. H. E.

BESSIE PARKER.

BY JOHN G. WATTS.

CHAPTER IV.—ON THE DOOR-STEP.

TWAS a rude, rough night; the wind was in the rainy quarter, and in the most uncertain of moods. Sometimes it rushed savagely along the streets of England's gloomy capital as if eager to sweep everything before it; anon it seemed to change its mind, pause, and, after one or two false starts, stop dead, and then silently steal back. Now its

voice was heard bellowing and blustering about chimney-stacks and gables, as if bent upon tearing them to pieces; and again, with a plaintive moan, it would hurry away, as though defeat had filled it with despair. Back it was in a few minutes with renewed strength, armed with a straggling rain, which it pelted down in heavy, telling drops that smote almost like hailstones. Few people were abroad, for, in addition to the



(Drawn by M. E. EDWARDS.)

"'Poor fellow!' said she."—p. 762.

uninviting nature of the weather, it was getting late.

Now, although the weather was so foul, and the night so far advanced, yet the little ill-clad Bessie braved its violence and grimness. There she stood, upon her door-step, awaiting her father's return. She had been playing sentinel for hours, weeping and praying, but ever watching. Shop after shop had closed, and the streets grown gradually still. The candles had been extinguished in the upper windows of the houses opposite, till all was blank save in one remote casement, and that little glimmer she watched with quite a deep anxiety. It seemed to her that, if that last light were to expire, she should sink down and die too. There was a companionship in its beams which indeed kept her from yielding wholly to despair. She began repeating to herself, in a voice that told how close the tears were pressing, two lines she had made some time before:—

"Father, father, do come home;
Bessie wants you to come home."

She said this sort of charm, because she could remember how he had, on one or two occasions, returned after she had repeated it. Sometimes an approaching figure would fill her with expectation; but her heart would sink again when she discovered that it was not her father, but somebody else's. Eleven o'clock sounded. Her eyes once more overflowed as she again moaned her little couplet:—

"Father, father, do come home;
Bessie wants you to come home."

The Royal Exchange chimes went the quarter, when a form that there was no mistaking came reeling along the street. She hastened forward, but it had turned into the vintner's ere she could intercept it.

"Father!" she sobbed, pushing open the door; "oh, father! mother is in the hospital, run over, and has been wanting to see you so long."

The wretched man's eyes started almost from their sockets, and a ghastly pallor overspread his countenance. He passed his hand tremblingly across his forehead.

"What, Bessie?" he asked, in a husky voice.

"Mother is in the hospital, run over, father, and thinks she is going to die."

A tremor shook John Parker from head to foot, and he seized on the bar-counter to save himself from falling.

"I will go to her at once," said he, recovering himself a trifle. He staggered into the street, followed by his child.

"Oh!" he moaned, "I am a miserable, wicked, wretched man. God have mercy on me!"

They hurried over into Southwark, and soon reached the hospital. On gaining the accident-ward, they learned that Mrs. Parker had got a

broken leg, and had also met with severe internal injuries; that she was in considerable danger, and that on no account could she be seen till the morning, unless death became imminent, when her friends would be immediately communicated with.

John pleaded hard, but to no purpose. The greatness of his trouble seemed to have sobered him completely. He paused on the stairs leading back to the courtyard, and burst into a most violent paroxysm of grief.

A middle-aged woman coming up, stopped to express commiseration. "Poor fellow!" said she. "What is it, my dear?" turning to Bessie. "Some'dy dead?"

"No, ma'am; my mother was run over this evening, and they won't let my father see her."

"Oh! I know. No. 27. Broken leg and internal injuries. No, poor cretur. The doctor said she wasn't to be disturbed on no account, as she'd dropt off to sleep. My opinion is that she'll be a good deal better when she wakes."

"Bless you, woman—bless you, whoever you are, for that word!" cried the distressed man, turning towards the nurse.

"There—there," continued the comforter, "you take heart. I'm now goin' on dooty. I shall sit by her all night, and watch her as if she was my own. There, take home that dear child, as ought to be out at this time. Good night;" and she moved on.

CHAPTER V.—THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

PASSING through the deserted streets, John scarcely uttered another word till he had reached the house in which he lived. His key admitted them. They stumbled up-stairs in the dark, and, entering their own apartment, Bessie felt for the flint and steel and struck a light. A little iron oil-lamp, that fitted into an iron candlestick, was pressed into service. Its modest beams revealed a room of fair proportions, looking larger than it really was from lack of furniture. A deal table, three rush-bottom chairs, and an old trunk were its chief articles. The floor was carpetless, but an old patched rug lay in front of the fireplace. In one corner of the apartment something like a bed was made upon the floor. A kind of cupboard, which Bessie called her room, contained its counterpart.

"Father, dear," said the poor child, drawing her arm about her parent's neck, as he sat hiding his face in his outspread hands, "father, don't cry so. Go to bed, do. They will let us see mother in the morning."

"Go to bed yourself, my child."

"I can't, father, unless you promise to."

The broken-down wretch cast a half-bewildered look upon the attenuated pleader, sighed, elevated

his brow, and replied, "Well, I will for your sake, if for nothing else, old lady."

She looked at him doubtingly.

"Oh! I mean it. I shan't take my things off, in case they should send from the hospital to say I'm wanted."

Tossing aside his tattered hat, he threw himself on his pallet.

"Good night, and God bless you, dear father," said Bessie, stooping over him and kissing his cheek. He returned the embrace, and repeated her words, laying a strong emphasis upon the "you."

Putting out the lamp, our heroine felt her way into her cupboard, and closed the door. Then falling upon her knees, she poured out an earnest prayer for succour for her mother, and asked that her father's heart might, out of its present trouble, be touched to repentance, and led to a purer, happier life.

Having made an end, she softly opened her door, and peeped into her father's room. All was quiet. "Father," she whispered. No answer. Ah, then he was asleep. Yes; she could tell that by his regular breathing.

With feelings of relief, she drew back, and once more closed her own door. No undressing for her either; she, too, was anxious to be ready to start for the hospital at a moment's notice. Merely throwing off her sodden shoes, she crept under her coverlet. No idea of going to sleep was entertained; on the contrary, her desire was to lie awake to be ready for any emergency.

Somehow or other, after hearing the clocks strike two and three, she became unconscious. A loud report startled her from her slumber. She listened, and heard footsteps hurrying from their door. Hopping across the room, she felt for her father: he was gone. Dragging her shawl from the back of a chair, where she had left it to dry, and catching up her crutch, the alarmed creature sped down-stairs, barefooted, and went forth. She could see through it all. A messenger had come from the hospital to say that her mother was worse, and her father, out of kindness, would not wake her to communicate the bad news. Yes; he must be gone to the hospital. Thither she would follow.

Pressing into service all the strength she could command, she hastened up one street and down another, with a hope of overtaking her father; and sure enough, near London Bridge, she caught sight of him some distance in advance. The storm-clouds had broken, and the moon now again shone brightly down. She attempted to call on him to stop, but could not utter a word. She was too weak to increase her speed. Presently, to her surprise, instead of taking London Bridge, her father turned into Thames Street. Whither was he going?

An indescribable horror stole over the pursuer

on observing him pass down a narrow lane which could lead only to the river. Clouds overspread the moon; she lost sight of him for a few moments. The clouds dispersed again, to reveal the pursued hurrying over a kind of jetty that ran a short distance out into the Thames, and where a number of craft lay moored. Bessie once more strove to cry aloud, but with no better success. Her father ran to a narrow plank that led to some barges. Springing on the gunwale of one, he crossed to another, then to a third.

The child by this had herself gained the plank. With hair streaming wildly in the wind, and uplifted arms, she saw him for an instant, and then, with a loud splash, she reeled and fell into the tide beneath. The shock brought back her power of utterance, for as she touched the water a loud shriek of "Father, save me!" awoke the echoes of the lonely scene.

On the very point of springing into the stream, with a hope of being carried from all human aid, John Parker was startled from his dreadful purpose by his child's cry for help. He knew her voice, turned in consternation, and flew towards the spot whence the sound had come.

"Bessie, darling, where are you?" shouted he.

"Father, save me!" gasped a faint voice below.

In a moment he was beside her. Bessie, by clinging to a rope which, fortunately, had been left dangling from one of the barges, had been preserved.

With some difficulty John managed to get his charge upon the jetty. Carrying her beneath the nearest lamp, and putting back her long wet locks from her pale features, he kissed her passionately a dozen times.

"Do you feel very ill, darling?" said he.

"Not very, father," was the faint reply.

"What brought you to the water-side?"

"I came after you, father."

"Oh, wretch that I am!" moaned he, "how undeserving such a wife and such a child!"

He turned his face homeward.

"I can walk, father; I'm too heavy for you," said the poor little waif.

"No, darling—no," was the instant response.

"It does me good to have you near my heart—to carry you just as I used to do in the days—the bright, good days—long gone by."

CHAPTER VI.—TWO RECOVERIES.

WHEN the grey morning broke into the abode of John Parker, it found him busied before a miserable fire drying his daughter's clothing. He moved softly as a shadow, and now and again peeped into her little chamber. The storm that oftentimes uproots the sturdiest trees, only bends the sapling. That which Bessie had passed

through during the last twelve hours would have crushed many a strong man; she had escaped comparatively unscathed, and now lay fast asleep upon her humble couch, peacefully as a baby upon its mother's bosom.

Occasionally her father paused, folded his arms upon his breast, and appeared to be lost in thought. Then his eyes would wander upward, and his lips move as if in prayer.

He knew the time when the chandler's shop hard by would open, and when the moment arrived, he stole on tip-toe from the room, and returned presently with a small quantity of coffee, which he proceeded to boil. From a cupboard near the window two cups were produced (one minus its handle) and a saucer. These he set upon a little tray, the jannapping of which had been so injured that it looked just like a map. Next came forth a small piece of bread, a slice of which he proceeded to toast on the end of the knife it had been cut with. When nicely browned, a butter-pot made its appearance. In vain the knife-blade was run round it; scraping was a waste of time. His countenance fell. Pockets were rummaged over with the most barren results. At last, with a sigh and a shake of the head, the penitent began pouring out the coffee. With a cup of the pleasant beverage in one hand, and the slice of toast in the other, he sought the cripple's couch.

"Bessie," he called softly.

"Yes, mother," said she, opening her eyes. All the truth flashed upon her in an instant, and she put her hands before her face.

"My darling," said her father, "don't give way to sorrow; I've good news for you. Mother is going on better than could have been expected. The nurse we met on the stairs at the hospital got a woman who lives near, and who came off duty some time ago, to call with that report."

The little maid's face brightened up with an expression such as an angel's might wear, and clasping her hands together, she there and then fell upon her knees, and poured out her thanks to the Giver of every good and perfect gift for this fresh proof of his mercy.

Her prayer was very short, and when she had finished, she looked round, and, behold, her father was upon his knees too. As he arose, there was an expression upon his face that had not been there for many a long month.

"Bessie," said he, "you see that I have not forgotten the promise I made you on our way home this morning, that I would never more begin nor end a day without thanking Heaven for mercies given, and asking succour for the future. Your cry of 'Father, save me!' uttered when you fell into the river, caught me from a suicide's grave. While you have been sleeping, I have uttered that same supplication, and the

God of the wretched has, I believe and trust, heard me; and, with his help, I will turn to a better life, and, if it shall please him to spare your dear mother to us, endeavour to win back for her, as well as for you, that condition of comfort which my folly and wickedness has lost."

Bessie's cup of coffee was taken with a zest that morning, although there was no milk in it, and her dry toast consumed with an appetite, which an epicure might have envied. When they subsequently got to the hospital, Mary was found to be doing well. John was allowed just to whisper a word in her ear—a word, it was, that brought a radiant smile upon her bloodless face. They parted directly afterwards, but the heart of either was a world the better for that interview.

Mrs. Parker's health fluctuated for some time, and once or twice she lay in a very precarious condition; but at last she really began to mend, and three months from the date of her admittance into the hospital, saw her in a condition to return to her friends.

John, who had completely turned over a new leaf, had, after obtaining some jobbing employment, succeeded in getting taken on in an humble capacity as a regular hand, by the firm with whom he had spent so much of his life. On the day settled upon for Mary's return home, he sought his employers and asked for a half day's leave. They looked grave, but upon learning the reason of his requiring it, not only acquiesced, but presented him with a crown-piece to provide a hackney coach for the convalescent.

In high glee, he and Bessie started for St. Thomas's, and with exultant hearts brought forth the patient. They were soon over the water, and rolling in the direction of the home in which Mary had spent so many unhappy moments. When they reached the turning which led to it, she reminded John.

"All right, my dear," said he; "I want to take you a little further."

Two streets in advance, the driver of his own accord drew up at a respectable three-storied house.

"What is he stopping here for?" inquired the perplexed woman.

Bessie's face broadened with delight, and the brave man laughed outright as he replied, "This is where we live now. The second-floor is ours; took it last Monday on the strength of regular employment, my dear. Got tired of living in the other dirty hole."

Mrs. Parker's astonishment and delight were great, and when she got up-stairs, still greater; for her husband had managed to get the place into a condition of comfort far beyond what the

most sanguine might have expected in so short a time. The floor was partly covered with a piece of second-hand carpeting, quite tidy; the chairs had been repaired, and several articles much

prized by Mary had been won back from the pawnbrokers'; and as they sat down together that afternoon to tea, there could not have been found a happier little group in all England.

HONOUR.

HERE, little Eva, come here a minute; I want to tell you something."

Little fair-haired Eva ran forward, delighted to be the honoured recipient of her grown-up cousin's confidence.

Her Cousin Rhoda was the grand young lady that had come into their quiet country life, turning everything topsy-turvy, with her fashionable habits, causing the servants more trouble than all the rest of the family put together, with her lazy and untidy ways, and yet looked up to and thought much of by all; giving her directions, and demanding little attentions of them, with the air of one who was conferring a favour—such was Cousin Rhoda, who had just spoken to Eva, calling her from her little garden to where she was standing at the gate, which led from the garden into the playground of the boys' school next door.

The playground had at one time belonged to Eva's papa's farm, and had formed the orchard, but some years ago it had been arranged that Dr. Wildman, the schoolmaster, should rent it from the farmer, as he could not obtain any other piece of land near enough to the house to serve as a playground for his boys. Thus it was that the gate mentioned opened from the farmer's garden into the schoolmaster's ground.

"Do you know what the word *honour* means, Cousin Eva?"

"Renown," answered Eva, with a wonderful memory of that morning's spelling lesson.

"Fudge!" returned Rhoda, in not the politest of tones; "it's not that kind of honour that I mean. I mean, if I tell you a secret, do you know that it would be a breach of honour for you to tell it to any one?"

"Yes," answered Eva, with a dim idea of some terrible revelations forthcoming.

"Do you know, Eva, there's something in the Bible about dishonourable people, and how they are treated? Something dreadful happens to them, though I don't quite know what."

"No more do I," answered Eva, trying in vain to remember any text bearing upon the point in question.

"Well, then, Eva, if I tell you a great secret, will you promise never to breathe a word of it to any one?"

"Yes, Rhoda."

"If any one were to beat you, or say they would kill you, would you tell?"

"No," answered Eva, with an awe-stricken face.

"That's right, Eva; you're not a bad little thing after all! Well, here goes. You know Tom Fordyn's rage for rearing ducks and geese, and, in fact, all the horrid creatures under the sun?"

"I don't think they're horrid," answered Eva.

"Oh, you little silly; that's nothing to do with it. But you know that pretty powder that I had upstairs in a bottle labelled poison?"

"That—that I spilt all over your dress, and you were so angry about?"

"Yes. Well, Tom Fordyn made me in an awful way. He called me a vain, stuck-up young monkey, the impudent fellow; and so to serve him out I put a little of the powder among the food that he gives to his creatures. I had an awful bother to get at them. It was easy enough getting through the playground, but the bother was getting at the bag where he keeps the food for his ducks and things. You see, I thought it would make his sweet pets ill, and then he'd be frightened. I only put in the least piece in the world, and to-day I went to look at them, and there were a lot of them lying dead. Oh, I was in such a fright! but I managed to take them up and hide them behind a lot of lumber in the shed. Now, you know, I am going home to-morrow, and so it won't be for a moment supposed that I am the culprit; but if it should be hinted at, I want you to tell everybody that it is not me. Will you?"

"Why it would be telling a story."

"Oh, you're mighty particular all of a sudden. I dare say you often tell stories to answer your own purpose."

"No, I don't," answered Eva, stoutly; "and I am not going to tell one for anybody."

"I am sorry I told you, you little sneak."

"I don't know what you mean; but I won't say a word about what you've told me."

"But, Eva, dear," continued Rhoda, coaxingly, "won't you tell them it wasn't me? I know you're too good-natured to refuse."

"No, I'm not," answered Eva.

"Well, at any rate you won't split on me, I know—that's a good thing, for if Aunt or Uncle Markham were to hear of it they'd never forgive me, I do think." Thus soliloquising, Rhoda walked off.

Little Eva trotted back to her garden, feeling very grand in the importance of the secret which had been entrusted to her, although she did not exactly admire the way in which her cousin had spoken to her.

On the next day Rhoda Armytage went back to her fashionable London home, leaving those whom she had amused and bewildered with her strange ways and lively movements, to relapse into their usual state of sluggish farm life; and Rhoda sped on her way, rejoiced that every moment carried her farther from the detection of her hare-brained trick.

Little Eva was scarcely recovering from her new weight of responsibility, when she was surprised by a visit from her brother Robert—a most unusual thing, for Robert was quite above (or thought he was) making a companion of a girl, and especially his sister, too.

"I say, 'Va; I want you a moment."

"I'm coming," answered Eva, wondering if she was going to hear another secret.

"I've got in for it finely. Do you know Tom Fordyn's lost a lot of his ducks? and as it happened I was near the duck-pond all the afternoon, and alone, too. They said it was me directly, though how or why I should make off with them is a mystery to me. Of course they'll find out it is not me, though if they didn't it might get me into a mess. Don't tell papa or mamma, for I don't think they'd believe me; they think I'm one of the worst fellows going. Do you know anything about it?"

"No—o," answered Eva, reluctantly, not daring to say anything about her secret, and feeling that she was hardly telling the truth.

For the remainder of the day Eva felt very uneasy about her brother, and almost wished that the secret had never been committed to her care.

The next thing Eva heard was that the boys had determined to keep the matter amongst themselves, and had come to the conclusion that they would form a sort of court-martial and try him. Robert had assented to this, and had the privilege of appointing any twelve boys he would prefer to act as a jury. If found guilty, he was to be expelled from all the clubs and amusements of the school; which, though in itself but a trivial matter, is a great disgrace to any boy.

Poor little Eva began to feel that it was not such a delightful thing to be told secrets as she had imagined; and she almost wished that she had never been told that one of her Cousin Rhoda's. She was quite sure that she wished Rhoda had never come near them. Should she tell all that she knew about it? She almost determined to do so; but then she had promised that, even if she were beaten to do so, she would not, and Rhoda had said that something dreadful would happen to her if she broke her word. What it might be she could not even guess. Perhaps she would be killed, or something nearly as dreadful; and when little Eva thought of it, she became so terrified, that she was obliged to take a book and read away very industriously in order to get the subject out of her mind.

The trial was to take place in the following week,

and during the intervening days Robert occupied the unenviable position of being "sent to Coventry," and it was all the harder to bear, inasmuch that he was perfectly innocent. Appearances were so much against him, that not one boy in the school was on his side, which was more remarkable as he was generally a great favourite, while Tom Fordyn, on the contrary, was a boy generally disliked.

Eva, in her anxiety to know how her brother would get on, begged to be allowed to be present at the trial; and, seeing her distress for his sake, Robert, who was really a good-natured boy, did not like to refuse her.

An unused barn was turned into an impromptu court, a space being railed off for the judges and jury, and other spaces for the prisoner and the witnesses. There were to be two judges, one appointed by the prisoner, and the other by the school; and if they could not agree, the doctor would be asked to decide.

The first witness called was Tom Fordyn, who, having promised on his honour to say nothing that he did not know to be strictly true, commenced his statement.

He had been lying down on the grass reading, when he saw some one moving about near his duck-pond, but as there were some bushes between them, he could not exactly make out who it was. So getting up, he walked along very softly till he came to a place where he could distinctly see the person moving about without being seen. He then discovered that it was Robert Markham, and that he was looking into the water. He also saw him stoop down, and either drop something into the water, or take something out—which he could not say. At that time his ducklings were running about close by the edge of the pond, and Robert Markham left the spot for a few minutes, and then returned and threw them some grain. He suspected there was poison mixed with it; and with this remark Tom Fordyn concluded his evidence.

Many of the other boys gave their evidence, which was chiefly to the effect that Robert Markham and Tom Fordyn had not been on good terms, and that the boys took advantage of the slightest pretext for a quarrel. Only one boy spoke up for Robert, reminding the jury that Tom Fordyn was generally the aggressor, and that, as they all knew, he had without the least provocation played Markham some very nasty tricks.

When all the witnesses had been heard, Robert was asked whether he was guilty, and, replying in the negative, Tom Fordyn requested leave to ask the prisoner for the time being a few questions.

"Did you or did you not tell your sister that you did not wish your father or mother to know of my loss?"

"I did," replied Robert.

"May I demand your reason?" asked Tom Fordyn,

with a look of triumph, and an unpleasant stress on the word demand.

"Simply that I had lost my pencil-case in the water, and I did not wish them to know it, as it had been given me by my father only the day before, and it was through throwing it carelessly into the air and catching it, that I lost it. If I had told him about the suspicion that had fallen on me, he would have asked me what I had been doing at the pond, and then I must have told him about the pencil-case, and he would have been vexed with me."

"A likely story!" burst forth Tom Fordyn.

"Is there no other witness before we close the evidence?" asked one of the judges.

"Perhaps this little body may know something about it," said Tom Fordyn, pulling Eva unwillingly from her corner.

"A capital idea," remarked one of the jury:

So, despite her remonstrances, Eva was placed in the witness-box, and asked to tell anything she might know about her brother and the ducks; but as she did not answer, Tom Fordyn asked her whether Robert had said anything about it to her.

"Yes," she answered.

"Do you know who killed the ducks?" asked Tom.

"Yes," replied Eva.

"Tell us, then," screamed several voices in any-tling but an orderly style.

"I cannot; I promised I wouldn't," said Eva, beginning to cry.

"Oh, it is very evident," said Tom, with a grand air; "he has made her promise not to tell, and then trumped up some wild-geese story about a pencil-case. Very clever, no doubt, but I shall require a large amount of salt to make that go down. I don't take all I hear for gospel quite."

Here Tom's eloquence was interrupted by a cry of "Order" from the court officials, and the jury then retired into the playground to sum up the evidence. Eva was quite sensible enough to know that what she had said would tell against her brother, though even that knowledge could not prevail upon her to break her faith with her cousin.

While the jury were discussing among themselves, a great deal of talking was going on in the court. Robert, taking advantage of the disorder prevailing, called Eva to his side. "Don't cry," he said to her, kindly, "you did quite right to tell the truth;" and Eva hearing, instead of the reproaches she had expected, her brother speaking so kindly, began to dry her tears.

"Eva, don't be afraid to tell me, I won't let you get into a noise, but did you kill those ducklings in any way? You said you knew who had."

"Me! No, Robert," answered Eva. "I know who did, but I promised faithfully that I would never tell any one."

"But there would surely be no harm in your telling, just to get me out of this scrape."

"Oh, but I promised," said Eva, with terrible visions of the punishment of a dishonourable person before her eyes.

"You're a silly little thing," said Robert, in an annoyed tone, but in reality far too brave-hearted a boy to threaten his sister into revealing the secret she held with such tenacity.

After much conferring between the judges and the jury, the principal judge, in a speech that did him great credit, announced that they had agreed upon a verdict. Eva listened breathlessly. They had decided that the prisoner was guilty, and that, in consequence, he should hereafter be debarred from the privilege of joining in any of the games of the establishment, and from belonging to any of their clubs or associations, and also that he ought to restore to Tom Fordyn the worth of the poultry that had been destroyed by his agency.

Now, doubtless, you will think it but a very slight punishment that had been inflicted on Robert by his schoolmates, but I can tell you it is no pleasant matter to be accused, even of a slight thing, and it is still worse when you are perfectly guiltless, and yet every one shuns you, and suspects you of every mean act that may be committed by a set of boys. Besides the disgrace, it is not an event for rejoicing to see other boys enjoying themselves, and be conscious that for no fault of your own you are debarred from joining with them. It rankled, too, in Robert's mind to think that, if Eva liked, she might remove doubt from every mind by only a few words, and yet, for some foolish notion, she would not speak those few words.

A few weeks after the trial, Eva received a letter from her Cousin Rhoda, which ran thus:—

MY DEAR LITTLE COZ,—I suppose you'll think I'm annoyed because I've not spun you a yarn before this, but the truth is I was so afraid you had blabbed, that I didn't dare to; for I know how angry my aunt would be. But knowing that you are a good-natured little fool, I at last ventured. Don't be angry because I called you a fool; it's only my way. How are my respected old uncle and aunt? Mind you give my love and all that to them, and mind you write to me and tell me how that little prig of a Tom Fordyn is getting on. I hope some one will serve him out; he deserves it.—With best love, your affectionate cousin,
RHODDY.

P.S.—I am having plenty of fun. My aunt's staying here. She's a stupid old woman, with a horror of slang. Don't I horrify her, that's all!
R. A.

It was some time before Eva could quite make out the meaning of her cousin's letter. When she did so, she began thinking over it. It was evident, from her cousin's being afraid of her having "blabbed," as she termed it, that she had scarcely expected her to keep her secret. Eva resolved to write and ask her to release her from her promise. It would not affect her at all that distance, for London was many miles from the village where Farmer Markham lived. Accordingly, Eva wrote to her cousin, and in

return received a letter in which Rhoda said that she could not think of letting Eva tell her aunt, as her aunt would never forgive her. Eva did not exactly see the force of the argument, but she dared not tell of Rhoda's secret, as Rhoda had refused to give her permission.

Eva was sitting by the side of her bed one morning, thinking how much she wished that she might tell all she knew, and clear Robert, when her mamma came in holding a letter in her hand.

"I found this letter on the dining-room floor. It is from your Cousin Rhoda, and she seems to speak of some secret. What is it?" asked Mrs. Markham, who pretty well guessed the truth.

"I cannot tell you, mamma," said Eva; "I promised Rhoda I would not."

"But if I ask you, you may tell me."

"But, mamma," persisted Eva; "Rhoda said that something dreadful would happen to me if I did."

"That was not true," said Mrs. Markham; and Eva, feeling reassured, was only too glad to tell her mamma of her secret trouble.

"You should have told me of this before," said Mrs. Markham; "but Rhoda is much more to blame than you, and I shall write to her and tell her so."

"Oh, mamma!" said Eva, in affright, "what will she say?"

"She will know that I have been told of her deception, and I think she will feel thoroughly ashamed of herself."

Mrs. Markham was right in her conjecture. Rhoda was ashamed of herself, and when she knew of the trouble her wickedness had caused her cousin, she wrote immediately to her aunt, expressing her sorrow for the disgrace that Robert had endured on her account.

Of course, this letter was passed all round the school, and many a boy was delighted to hear of the turn affairs had taken, and Robert was formally reinstated in all his former privileges, besides occupying the trying position of a hero.

And Eva was relieved of her troublesome secret, and found out the true meaning of the word *honour*.

L. M. C.

KEY TO ENIGMA ON PAGE 752.

"The Lord avenge me."—1 Sam. xxiv. 12.

1. T edal	Gen. xiv. 1.
2. H alah	2 Kings xvii. 6.
3. E tham	Exod. xlii. 20.
4. L achish	2 Chron. xxv. 27.
5. O rnan's	1 Chron. xxi. 15.
6. R ehoboam's	1 Kings xiv. 25.
7. D ebir	Judg. i. 11.
8. A biathar	1 Sam. xxii. 20.
9. V ashti	Esth. i. 10.
10. E n-rogel	2 Sam. xvi. 17.
11. N ehemiah	Neh. ii. 12.
12. G ibbethon	1 Kings xv. 27.
13. E n-gedi	1 Sam. xxiii. 29.
14. M akkedah	Josh. x. 16.
15. E ben-ezer	1 Sam. iv. 1.

AT NIGHTFALL.



WHEN will he come again—to-night—to-morrow?

When will he come—my heart's true love, my own?

When will he come to soothe this restless sorrow,

And comfort me with love's delightful tone?

When will he come, and why this weary parting?

Why stays the darling of my life away?

The foolish tears into mine eyes are starting,

And night draws on—he will not come to-day.

Can he be ill? Oh, what if he be stricken

With some dread fever, and his reason fled;

The thought is agony, my pulses quicken;
What if he come no more—if he be dead!

It cannot be. Perchance I am forsaken
For some one nearer, dearer to his heart;

Has he forgotten me? must I awaken
To this sad fate—and is it thus we part?

Alas! I only know that I am keeping
Incessant vigil, and I watch in vain;

I only know my eyes are hot with weeping,
I only know my heart is full of pain.

And still he comes not; yet what'er betideth,
May all good angels have him in their care,

And strew his path, wherever he abideth,

With blessings limitless as my despair.

G.